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FOLK-LORE SCRAP-BOOK.

THE CHOCTAW GAME OF ACHAHPIH.—In the “Lake Como Normal” (published in the interest of the Lake Como Normal School), January-February, 1897, H. S. Halbert gives an account of this amusement :—

“This ancient game, played with a circular stone about five inches in diameter, and poles, became almost extinct among the Choctaws of Mississippi about the beginning of the present century, although it was occasionally played by the Six Towns Choctaws of Jasper County as late as 1842.

“Writers of the last century have left us more or less imperfect descriptions of the game, which they call chungkee, but it was never known by that name among the Choctaws, who invariably speak of it as achahpih, and the stone used in playing the game as tali chanaha. ‘Kil ittim achahpi,’—‘Let us play achahpi,’—one Choctaw would say to another in soliciting him to play the game.

“The statement in M. F. Force’s ‘Mound Builders,’ that chungkee is the Choctaw word for this game, is a mistake ; also the statement that the name of the game is preserved in Mississippi in the name Chunkey River. Chunkey River and the old Indian town of Chunkey both derived their names from chunki, the Choctaw word for black martin, perhaps so called from the great numbers of those birds in that region.

“Many years ago there lived in Neshoba County an aged Choctaw named Mehubbee, who had often seen the achahpih game played in his youth, and who still had an achahpih stone in his possession. In the summer of 1876 this aged Indian prepared an achahpih ground in an old field on Talashu Creek, and instructed some young Choctaws how to play this almost-forgotten game of their forefathers. This was undoubtedly the last time this ancient game was ever played in the State of Mississippi. From a conversation with one of those players, the following facts were learned :—

“A level piece of ground is selected, and an achahpih yard—ai achahpih—laid off, being about one hundred feet long and twelve feet wide. The yard is cleared off, tramped hard, and made as smooth and level as possible. The achahpih poles were made of slender swamp hickory saplings, from which the bark was stripped and the poles scraped perfectly smooth and seasoned over a fire. They were about ten feet long and the size of an ordinary hoe-handle. The head, or striking end, of the pole was made round. Near the head were cut around each pole four parallel grooves. One fourth of the way down, the poles were cut two more grooves, and a single one around the middle of each, making seven grooves in all. Twelve was the game, and the play alternated from one end of the ground to the other. Two men played the game, taking their stand at one end of the ground, a third man standing between them, whose duty it was to roll the stone toward the other end. The two players, whom I shall call Hoen-tubbee and Tonubbee, held their poles in a slanting position, one end resting against the palm on the fingers of the right hand, which was thrust to the rearward, the body resting loosely in the left hand. The stone being thrown

by the third party, both players darted their poles at it as it rolled toward the other end of the ground, each trying to strike the stone with the head of the pole. The object in striking the stone was that, if the pole should hit the stone, there was greater probability of their stopping near each other. As soon as the throw was completed, the distances between the stone and the grooves on the poles were measured. The game was counted as follows: If the four grooves on Hoentubbee's pole were nearer than any on Tonubbee's, then Hoentubbee counted four; if the single groove was nearer, he counted one; if the two grooves were nearer, he counted two. In case the nearest grooves on each pole were the same distance from the stone, no count was made. It was possible for a player to win the game in three throws by having the good fortune to make four at each throw. If the players had no one to throw for them, they threw it alternately for each other.

"The achahpih game was often kept up the entire day. Like other Indian games, there was much betting among both players and spectators. My informant considered the game a very tedious one, and expressed surprise that his ancestors ever took any pleasure in such a dull and uninteresting pastime.

"A great amount of labor must have been required in making the achahpih stones, as they were handed down from one generation to another as precious heirlooms. As the Indian came in contact with the civilization of the white man with his implements of iron, new habits and industries were introduced, no new achahpih stones were made to take the places of those lost or destroyed; consequently the game gradually passed out of use, and to-day there are but few living persons who have witnessed the achahpih game as played by the Southern Indians."

LOCAL MEETINGS AND OTHER NOTICES.

SUMMER MEETING OF THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY AT DETROIT, AUGUST 10. — As will be observed by reference to the notice of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as given below, one of the days of the meeting at Detroit will be devoted to Folk-Lore, and will constitute a joint meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society and of section H. Members of the Society intending to present papers may communicate with the secretary.

It will be remembered that the annual meeting of the Society for the current year has already been announced as to take place at Baltimore, Md., December 28, 1897.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE BALTIMORE BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY, FROM APRIL, 1896, TO APRIL, 1897. — During the past year the Society has met at the rooms of the Quadriga Club, 12 East Centre Street, on the second Thursday of the month, at eight P. M.